

Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Hatchery Committee
Statement of Agreement
Regarding Implementation of Steelhead
Rearing and Acclimation at the Chiwawa Acclimation Facility
Presented for Decision at January 20, 2010 meeting
** Incorporated revisions from 1/20/2010 HC meeting underlined.

Statement

The Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Hatchery Committees (HC) agree that Chelan PUD (District) may use the Chiwawa acclimation facility to rear and acclimate steelhead for release into the Wenatchee River and its tributaries consistent with §5.6 of the *Wenatchee River Summer Steelhead Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan* (HGMP).

The District would convert/modify one of the existing Chiwawa spring Chinook acclimation ponds to accommodate approximately 200,000 WxW steelhead for brood year 2011 (e.g., progeny for spawners collected in 2010 and spawned in 2011). The 200,000 steelhead described in this agreement would be in addition to those produced in the Chiwawa re-use pilot (200,000 new smolts in acclimation pond + 40,000 reuse smolts = 240,000 smolts total). The use of the Chiwawa facility to acclimate steelhead would be contingent upon the availability of adequate quantities of Wenatchee River water (based on the District's pending water right application) and appropriate modification to the Chiwawa spring Chinook acclimation ponds to accommodate rearing of both steelhead and variable ELISA levels of spring Chinook. Modifications to address variable ELISA levels of spring Chinook will be based upon the necessary space and water required to accommodate segregated rearing of spring Chinook with ELISA levels between 0.12 and 0.19, based on a historical running-average for Chiwawa River natural origin spring Chinook.¹

In the event that Wenatchee River water is not available by the time juvenile steelhead are scheduled to be transported to the Chiwawa facility (2011), the District proposes to rear and acclimate steelhead on Chiwawa River (or a combination of Wenatchee and Chiwawa water) as an interim measure. Temporary rearing and acclimation on Chiwawa water would be an improvement over Turtle Rock (Columbia River water) as it would reduce out-of-basin straying (e.g., outside of the Wenatchee Basin) until the Wenatchee water right is acquired.

The agreement to rear 200,000 smolts at Chiwawa does not preclude the rearing and acclimation of additional numbers of steelhead in the event additional space is available at Chiwawa or other locations in the Wenatchee Basin (to be determined by the HC).

The relocation of 200,000 steelhead smolts from acclimation at Turtle Rock Island to the Wenatchee River does reduce or diminish the District's obligation to move its full

¹ As described in the HCP HC approved Appendix 1 "BKD Management" of the *Chiwawa Spring Chinook Hatchery Genetic Management Plan*.

steelhead production (Currently 400,000 smolts) to acclimation in the Wenatchee River Basin according to plans described in the HGMP and as agreed to by the HC. The District is planning to re-allocate capacity within the footprint of the Chiwawa acclimation facility to make efficient use of space provided by the reduction of spring Chinook production. See Attachment 1 for additional information.

Background

This SOA serves several purposes: (1) implement the HC approved HGMP acclimation plan to utilize Chiwawa facility as a steelhead acclimation site, (2) formalize the origin of priority of steelhead to be reared and acclimated (i.e., WxW), and (3) provide adequate notification for any additional approvals/reviews related to the change in location of the program.

The rationale for rearing steelhead at the Chiwawa facility is based on improving the homing fidelity of returning adults to the Wenatchee Basin. The Wenatchee steelhead HGMP (2009) also provides a detailed description of the issues considered in the process of selecting steelhead acclimation facilities.

The use of the Chiwawa facility to rear and acclimate steelhead is possible as a result of reducing the Chiwawa spring Chinook program to 298,000 smolts as agreed to in the December 16th, 2009, Statement Of Agreement: *Reduction of Chiwawa Spring Chinook Production Level to 298,000 Smolts*. The use of the Chiwawa facility for steelhead does not change spring Chinook BKD capacity obligations agreed to previously by the HCP HC.

Attachment 1. Design Update for Chiwawa Rearing & Acclimation Facility.

The District will utilize the 2008 feasibility study² as the foundation for creating steelhead acclimation capacity at Chiwawa. Originally, the District proposed implementing the six pond alternative (see Table 1), however, if 50% of the production is acclimated in the existing pond (formerly occupied by spring Chinook), the new configuration may only require construction of three ponds (or two since the previous proposal had a shared center-wall between pairs of ponds). Regardless, it is anticipated that there will be additional design work associated with the development of the facility. The District will move forward with this process and provide the HC with updates for approval if and where proposed changes deviate from the original 2008 proposal. With the HC approval to utilize existing acclimation space at Chiwawa, the project is now “smaller” than originally anticipated and should be more expedient to construct (not withstanding permit issuance timeframes). The District will provide an update on the design process at the February, 2010, HCP HC meeting.

Table 1
Vessel Sizing and Configuration

	Length	Vessel Size (ft)		Rearing Volume Each Pond (cf)
		Width	Average Depth	
<u>Existing Spring Chinook Ponds</u>				
Two equal-size ponds	123.5	50.6	6	37,495
<u>Two-Pond Alternative</u>				
Small pond	120	54	6	38,880
Large pond	170	77	6	78,540
<u>Three-Pond Alternative</u>				
Three equal-size ponds	129	50.6	6	39,164
<u>Six-Pond Alternative¹</u>				
Six equal-size ponds	107	25	6	16,000

¹The six-pond alternative utilizes updated biological criteria provided February 26, 2008.

² From “*CHIWAHA REARING/ACCLIMATION FACILITY – WENATCHEE STEELHEAD FEASIBILITY (CCPUD 3-3-2008)*.”